Grand Rapids:

WELCOME TO THE BIG TEN.
They had been talking about this for a long time, first informally, then in earnest – the idea of creating a four-year medical school in Grand Rapids.

As early as the 1970s, some of the city’s hospital administrators thought it would make sense for Michigan State University to operate a full-fledged medical school in Grand Rapids, recalled Philip McCorkle, then an executive of Butterworth Hospital and now CEO of Saint Mary’s Health Care.

“Everyone thought this was a great idea,” he said.

But for the next few decades it remained just that: an idea. Then came a convergence of needs that made the idea more feasible, if not inevitable: the leaders of Michigan State University College of Human Medicine wanted to increase their research and needed to expand their enrollment to meet a growing demand for primary care physicians; Grand Rapids needed a medical school to complete its emerging life sciences sector.

Proof that the idea became reality now stands on Michigan Street in downtown Grand Rapids: a new, seven-story headquarters for the Michigan State University College of Human Medicine.

“This was a singular opportunity,” said Marsha D. Rappley, MD (CHM ’84), the College of Human Medicine’s dean. “Grand Rapids is a region that deserves a medical school,” she said, noting the area’s reputation for high-quality health care at a low cost. “That’s the perfect place to educate our physicians of the future.”

But why Grand Rapids?

MSU’s third- and fourth-year medical students have been studying in the hospitals, clinics and doctors’ offices of Michigan’s second largest city since shortly after the College of Human Medicine was founded in 1964.

A lot has happened in recent years to make Grand Rapids more attractive. It was the sixth largest metropolitan area in the country without a medical school. By some measures, it is the nation’s second most philanthropic community, a potential source of support for the medical school.

Butterworth and Blodgett hospitals had merged in 1997, forming the Spectrum Health System, which had continued growing into West Michigan’s largest employer, as well as a regional health care provider. Saint Mary’s Health Care, owned by Trinity Health, also had grown in facilities and services.

With its hospitals and other health care facilities, Grand Rapids offered a rich opportunity for MSU to expand its community-integrated approach to medical education, enlisting the area’s physicians in training tomorrow’s doctors.

The presence of the Van Andel Institute, a medical research facility founded in the mid 1990s by the late Jay Van Andel, was an additional lure.

Peter Secchia, (MSU ’62), former U.S. ambassador to Italy, recalled speaking to then-MSU President Peter McPherson in the late 1990s about opening a four-year medical school in Grand Rapids. After McPherson left MSU, Lou Anna K. Simon, his successor, took up the cause.

By the early 2000s, the needs of MSU and the Grand Rapids medical community had converged. The university needed to expand its medical school’s research and enrollment.

“There’s no staying the same in the current economic climate,” Dean Rappley said. “If you stay the same, you get smaller.”

For the Grand Rapids hospitals and other health care facilities, the need for a medical school was becoming more urgent.

“We’re trying to make this a significant life sciences community,” Spectrum Health CEO Richard Breon said. “The piece that was missing was a medical school.

“T’ll be a real pride factor in being able to say you have a medical school in your community.”

There’s also a real practical factor. A 2003 study commissioned by the Right Place, Inc., a Grand Rapids-based economic development organization, identified a medical school as an important component if the city was to realize its goal of becoming a life sciences center. A medical school would help the hospitals recruit physicians, including those who want to teach future doctors as well as treat patients, and it would lead to more research and clinical trials.

(continued on page 10)
the Van Andel Institute. The developers—a partnership between The Christman Co. and RDV Corp.—were already planning to construct an office building there as part of a larger complex of four medical buildings and an underlying parking garage, all known as the Michigan Street Development.

URS brought in Ellenzweig Architecture, a Cambridge, Mass. firm specialized in building medical schools, to study whether the site was workable.

“It had to fit that footprint,” Ellenzweig President Michael Lauber said. “Initially we thought that was going to be difficult to do. People were concerned, how would it look sitting atop a five-story parking garage? We made it work.”

The architects developed a plan that called for covering the entire structure, including the parking levels, with cast stone resembling limestone, creating the appearance that it is one building top to bottom. They furthered that illusion by incorporating windows extending from the top floor to the ground.

That solved the exterior problem. Somehow the architects had to fit all the specialized rooms—large lecture halls, small exam rooms and other spaces unique to a medical school—inside the multi-story building.

“The challenge is, how do we organize all these so it is coherent?” Lauber said. “One thing that’s important in a vertical building is to try to maintain a sense of community.”

(Continued on Page 4)

This wasn’t going to be easy.

“We spent months talking about what this building would be,” said Richard Temple, senior project manager for URS, the principal architect for Michigan State University’s new College of Human Medicine headquarters. “If there had to be one story to come out of this it would have to be the story of overcoming all the reasons not to do this.”

The first challenge was, how do you construct a seven-story medical school on top of a five-story parking garage without it looking like, well, a seven-story building on top of a five-story parking garage?

The second was, how do you create a sense of community in a multi-story building, particularly important for a medical school that emphasizes collaboration and the free flow of ideas?

The architects, builders, MSU and other partners overcame those obstacles, as evidenced by the building—called the Secchia Center for MSU Alumni and donors Peter and Joan Secchia—now standing in downtown Grand Rapids.

“We had all these challenges that became opportunities,” said Elizabeth Lawrence, assistant dean for capital and strategic planning and College of Human Medicine project lead for the Secchia Center. “It’s functional, and it’s beautiful, and it’s glorious. It’s a real tribute to the expertise of this team.”

MSU considered several Grand Rapids sites before settling on Michigan Street near Spectrum Health’s Butterworth Hospital and the Van Andel Institute. The developers—a partnership between The Christman Co. and RDV Corp.—were already planning to construct an office building there as part of a larger complex of four medical buildings and an underlying parking garage, all known as the Michigan Street Development.

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A four-story atrium helped solve that, as did windows and glass walls throughout. "Part of all we needed to create a community for students and faculty," said Shirine Boulos Anderson, an Ellenzweig architect who guided the project. "What we tried to achieve is a lot of transparency and openness. It was important for us to draw in as much natural light as possible.

The students told the architects they hated dark lecture halls, and they needed areas to meet informally and to study in groups or alone. Thus, the building includes lounges and study areas, and the four lecture halls offer plenty of natural light. "As you walk through this building, you have a constant sense of openness," Lauber said.

Because of the pioneering way MSU teaches its medical students, the building includes only two large classrooms, but it has several small conference rooms where second-year students will meet to discuss hypothetical cases, an approach known as problem-based learning.

"First of all, we needed to create a community for students and faculty, said Dr. Marsha Rappley, the College of Human Medicine's dean. "This has been a joy, the collaboration to create a state of the art educational building," said Dr. Marsha Rappley, the College of Human Medicine's dean.

"As you walk through this building, you have a constant sense of openness." Lauber said.

A tree in a cornfield near MSU's East Lansing campus, the Sixth Street Bridge in downtown Grand Rapids, pine needles, aloe plants and gingko leaves, all subjects in plain sight, inspired the works of art. Thus the name of the studio and business Amy Baur and Brian Boldon founded: inspainsight art.

With its distinctive, curved roof line, the Secchia Center already is a landmark on the Michigan Street Hill because of its concentration of hospital and research buildings. A column of windows on the building's east side, using low-energy LED lights, glows MSU green at night.

A plan to include a roof top garden and conservatory was put on hold to save money, but was revived when Richard and Helen DeVos, two of the school's chief benefactors, donated another $1.5 million.

"It’s a tree as a metaphor for the human body," Baur said, an appropriate symbol for a building dedicated to educating healers of the human body.

One floor up, another piece depicted a tree superimposed with geographical descriptions of the body — "proximal, supine, anterior, recumbent" — words provided by Marsha Rappley, the medical school's dean. Another combines the skeleton of a dead tree with the actions a doctor might take: "to explain, to seek, to consider, to analyze."

Rappley agreed with the depictions of plants and other living things as appropriate symbols and told the artists their works should represent a bridge between the College of Human Medicine in Grand Rapids and East Lansing.

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"This is hands down the largest, most complicated project we've ever done," Boldon said. "I became obsessed," she said. "I must have redone that piece 10 times but I finally got it."

Baur and Boldon stood before one near the elevators on the fourth floor. Baur, using a complicated process developed in Germany in recent years and refined by him, transferred the pictures to glass and ceramic tiles he had cut and molded. He then fired them in a kiln.

As a result, the roof top garden and conservatory, with café tables, benches, bamboo, climbing vines and other plants, is expected to be completed by late October, affording a spectacular view of downtown Grand Rapids and the Grand River valley.

"This piece was the hardest," Baur said. "I decided to do something I had never done before."

Based on interviews with medical students, she created a montage of 10 cubes, each appearing to be three-dimensional and combining multiple images.

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The couple have works in buildings all over the country. They've done others for MSU, including Wharton Center.

"This is hands down the largest, most complicated project we've ever done," Boldon said.
Thirteen years ago, the Spectrum Health System did not exist. Today, since the 1997 merger of Butterworth and Blodgett hospitals formed Spectrum Health, it has become the dominant health care provider in West Michigan with seven hospitals, more than 16,000 employees, 140 service sites and the Priority Health insurance company. Still, one thing was missing.

“We were thinking about how do we take this to the next level?” Spectrum CEO Richard Breon said. “The piece that was missing was a medical school.”

He recalled receiving a phone call eight years ago from then-MSU President Peter McPherson, floating the idea of expanding the university’s College of Human Medicine in Grand Rapids.

“It was pretty vague at that time,” Breon said. “For us it was, yes, it made sense.”

Some in the West Michigan medical community suggested contacting other medical schools about opening a branch in Grand Rapids, but MSU already had a strong presence there, and it was the only college willing to open a full, four-year medical school based in the city.

“Then you’re not just an extension,” Breon said. “You’re a medical school.”

For Spectrum Health, the choice was clear: To further its goal of expanding its medical research and recruit more physicians, it needed the Michigan State University College of Human Medicine. For Michigan State to achieve its goal of doubling its enrollment and expanding its research, the College of Human Medicine needed Spectrum Health.

“This would not have been possible without Spectrum Health,” said Marsha Rappley, MD, the College of Human Medicine’s dean. “Having Saint Mary’s (the city’s other large hospital) and the Van Andel Research Institute in the mix makes it a city-wide, region-wide effort.”

Spectrum made commitments of more than $85 million toward establishing the school in Grand Rapids, including $55 million to cover principal and interest on the building for the next 25 years and $30 million for research.

“One floor is named in recognition of Spectrum’s support – financial and otherwise – for the medical school. Many of Spectrum’s physicians, as well as those at Saint Mary’s Health Care and in private practice, will serve as volunteer faculty, teaching the medical students.

“It means you have people who are very focused on evidence-based medicine, people who are very focused on quality and safety,” Rappley said. “You already have that at Spectrum and Saint Mary’s, but this takes it up a notch.”

“ADDING MORE GREEN TO THE SPECTRUM”

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“THIS WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT SPECTRUM HEALTH.”
After Michigan State University decided expanding its medical school in Grand Rapids was a good idea, one question remained: Who was going to pay for it?

“We weren’t going to get any money from the Legislature,” said Steve Heacock, the then-chief administrative officer of the Van Andel Institute assigned to guide a group of stakeholders studying the idea. “It must make sense in the numbers.”

That meant the $90 million capital cost of the new building plus the cost of recruiting new faculty and jump starting collaborative research programs would be paid with donations from the hospitals, philanthropists and others without a penny from the state or federal governments. Spectrum Health became the largest contributor, making commitments of more than $85 million, including $55 million toward the principal and interest on the building for 25 years and $30 million for research. The Van Andel Institute donated $16 million for research, and Saint Mary’s Health Care gave $10 million for joint staff positions.

Peter Secchia (MSU ’62) and his wife Joan (MSU ’64) became the naming donors. Amway co-founder Richard DeVos and his wife Helen also made a substantial donation, as did other philanthropists and community members. MSU and Grand Action, a nonprofit downtown development group that had convened the stakeholders group, undertook a $50 million fundraising campaign.

“We reached out to our traditional donor community and made the pitch,” said Grand Action’s executive director Jon Nunn, “and they stepped up to the plate, realizing the potential impact on the community.”

In April, with about $11 million still left to raise, Richard and Helen DeVos made another dollar-for-dollar pledge to match up to $5 million toward completing the fundraising campaign.

Their son, Dick DeVos, as co-chair of Grand Action, counted on the community’s traditional “culture of giving” to help pay for the medical school’s expansion.

“I think most of them gave out of the same sense of commitment that prompted them to give to DeVos Place and the Van Andel Arena,” he said. “I just see that culture of giving goes across West Michigan. It was very much a team effort, and Grand Action was in the quarterback role.”

Marsha Rappley, MD, the College of Human Medicine’s dean, credited the cooperative spirit among the many partners— including Spectrum Health, Saint Mary’s Health Care, the Van Andel Institute, Grand Valley State University, the Right Place, Inc. and Grand Action— with making the expanded medical school a reality. But MSU also deserved credit for meeting the expectations of the local supporters, including a desire that the dean’s office be moved to Grand Rapids, making it the headquarters for the entire medical school.

“Most other schools would say, ‘This is what we do. Take it or leave it,’” Rappley said. “But MSU asked, ‘How can we be a good partner for you and this city?’

Moving the dean’s office to Grand Rapids was “very important” for the local supporters, said David Frey, co-chair of Grand Action: “The dean’s flag flies in Grand Rapids. It made the statement this is not a tentative move. It was a move made for all time.”

MSU President Lou Anna K. Simon gave “an enormous amount of credit to Grand Action. They really took the leadership in pulling together the stakeholders.”

Peter Secchia, U.S. ambassador to Italy from 1989 to 1993 and former chairman of Universal Forest Products, expressed pride at having his name on the new building, but more than that, he said he is pleased about what it means for the city’s future.

“Rich DeVos taught us all that you put your name on a building to demonstrate your commitment to that building,” he said. “It’s a legacy for me, but it’s also a dream come true. It’s just another block in the building of Grand Rapids. It’s another block, but it’s a major block.”
“From our perspective, a medical school brings research, brings intellectual property, brings jobs,” said Birgit Klohs, president and CEO of the Right Place, Inc.

Grand Action, a nonprofit organization that had built the downtown convention center and nearby arena, convened a stakeholders group – including the area’s hospitals, MSU, Grand Valley State University, the Right Place and the Van Andel Institute – to study the idea.

One of those stakeholders, Mark Murray, then president of GVSU and now president of Meijer Inc., could have blocked the plan by objecting to another large university invading his turf, but he didn’t.

“He was looking at the best interests of the broader community,” recalled Denise Holmes, the medical school’s associate dean for government relations and outreach. “He had a broad vision. He could see where there was the potential for economic development.”

Murray’s successor, Thomas J. Haan, said the medical school’s growth offers the opportunity for GVSU’s health care students, including those in nursing, physician assistant and occupational therapy programs, to work and learn with MSU’s medical students.

Another key figure was Lowell Bursch, MD, then executive vice president in charge of medical affairs for Spectrum Health. “He told us early on Spectrum Health was very interested in moving the next level,” Holmes said. “He felt a medical school would be very helpful to Spectrum Health in recruiting the caliber of staff it needed.”

“He was very effective in helping us assure the community that MSU would bring in a large staff to compete with their counterparts,” Holmes recalled. “He was looking at the best interests of the broader community,” she added. “He was a key individual in helping us assure the community that MSU would bring in a large staff to compete with their counterparts.”

After months of discussion, David Van Andel, the Van Andel Institute’s CEO who chaired the stakeholder’s group, called for a vote: “It cannot have anything but a positive economic impact.”

Bursch credited the forward thinking by community leaders with transforming an idea into reality.

“I think what made the difference is the university saw in the leadership of this community the commitment to a high-quality medical school,” she said. “There was no other community that could make that commitment. They extended a welcome.”

While the dean has moved her office to Grand Rapids, MSU will continue offering a full, four-year medical education in East Lansing. After completing their first two years in Grand Rapids or on MSU’s East Lansing campus, the students will spend the next two years studying in the hospitals, clinics and doctors’ offices in those two communities, as well as in community campuses in Flint, Kalamazoo, Midland, Saginaw, Traverse City and the Upper Peninsula.

“This is a commitment to compete with the best medical schools in the world with a model that sustains community-based education,” MSU President Simon said.

“The state has always been our campus,” she added. “We’re not duplicating resources. There’s a synergy between the work that will happen on all the campuses, but particularly between East Lansing and Grand Rapids. It’s headquarters is in Grand Rapids, but it’s a community-based medical school that benefits all of Michigan.”

Two years ago, the Grand Rapids campus began teaching its first class of second-year medical students in a temporary facility on Division Avenue in downtown Grand Rapids. This fall, the first class of first-year medical students began their studies in the Secchia Center. Many philanthropists and individuals donated millions of dollars, allowing the $90 million headquarters to be built without any taxpayers’ money.

As the new Secchia Center rose in a complex of hospitals and research facilities, Grand Rapids community leaders were looking toward the future benefits this unusual arrangement is likely to bring.

“It’s going to increase the number of jobs,” said John Canepa, who co-chairs Grand Action. “Certainly that’s important. It’s going to bring more funding in the form of grants.”

David Frey, also a Grand Action co-chair, expects the medical school’s expansion will attract new businesses to produce the drugs and medical devices developed by the researchers.

“I think the untold story here is not just better health, better physicians, but the commercialization of the research, the synergy that comes out of the university and the (Van Andel) Institute,” Frey said. “I cannot have anything but a positive economic impact.”

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“It was inevitable this would take place,” McCorkle, Saint Mary’s Health Care CEO, said. “We all recognized wanting to make Grand Rapids a medical center, a destination people would want to come to.”

With this kind of cooperation, we’re going to design the doctors of the future.”

Bursch was able to allay the concerns of some doctors in the community that MSU would bring in a large staff to compete with their practices. “He was very effective in helping us assure the community that was not the plan,” Holmes said. “He helped MSU build trust and credibility in the community.”

After months of discussion, David Van Andel, the Van Andel Institute’s CEO who chaired the stakeholder’s group, called for a vote: Did the members want to proceed with expanding the medical school in Grand Rapids?

The response was a unanimous “yes.”

From an educational and a medical standpoint, expanding the school in Grand Rapids made sense.

Since the school’s new headquarters would be built without any appropriation from the state Legislature, Grand Action agreed to undertake a fund-raising campaign. Spectrum Health, Saint Mary’s Health Care and the Van Andel Institute each pledged millions. Peter Secchia and his wife Joan (MSU ’64) made a substantial donation, prompting MSU to name the new building the Secchia Center. Many philanthropists and individuals donated millions of dollars, allowing the $90 million headquarters to be built without any taxpayers’ money.

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“The state has always been our campus,” she added. “We’re not duplicating resources. There’s a synergy between the work that will happen on all the campuses, but particularly between East Lansing and Grand Rapids. It’s headquarters is in Grand Rapids, but it’s a community-based medical school that benefits all of Michigan.”

Two years ago, the Grand Rapids campus began teaching its first class of second-year medical students in a temporary facility on Division Avenue in downtown Grand Rapids. This fall, the first class of first-year medical students began their studies in the Secchia Center, giving Grand Rapids a full four-year medical school.

“It was inevitable this would take place,” McCorkle, Saint Mary’s Health Care CEO, said. “We all recognized wanting to make Grand Rapids a medical center, a destination people would want to come to.”

With this kind of cooperation, we’re going to design the doctors of the future.”

GRAND RAPIDS IS A REGION THAT DESERVES A MEDICAL SCHOOL, THAT’S THE PERFECT PLACE TO EDUCATE OUR PHYSICIANS OF THE FUTURE.”
The new headquarters for Michigan State University College of Human Medicine is green. Sure, the building’s exterior is more of a light limestone color, but it encloses a heart of green – MSU green and environmental green. The new Secchia Center was designed to be as energy efficient as possible with little impact on the environment.

MSU officials expect the building will achieve at least LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) silver certification and are aiming for gold, the second highest awarded by the U.S. Green Building Council.

John O’Toole, vice-president for health care services for The Christman Co., which managed the construction of the Secchia Center, stood next to a cooling tower and centrifugal chiller in the mechanical room on the building’s top floor, an area out of sight to the public, but critical to achieving energy efficiency.

The quest for LEED certification began before the first shovel of dirt was turned, he said. It continued throughout construction and will guide how the building’s heating, cooling, lighting and other systems operate. Everyone – the architects, builders, donors and MSU officials – shared the goal of making the building environmentally friendly.

“This has been one of the most collaborative teams I’ve ever worked with,” O’Toole said. “It’s unbelievable how well this has gone.”

The building’s location in an urban setting, making use of existing infrastructure and alternative transportation, is part of the overall plan to achieve LEED certification, said Gavin Gardi, sustainable programs manager for The Christman Co. It includes reserved parking for energy efficient vehicles and plenty of bike racks. Most building materials came from within 500 miles and included recycled elements.

Waste building materials were recycled, and the building is equipped to recycle paper, glass, plastic, metal and other materials. Plants in the rooftop garden and main-floor plaza will be watered with drip irrigation, and fixtures in the restrooms are designed to minimize water usage.

The building also was designed with a heat recovery system, radiant floor heat in the atrium and lights that dim automatically in daylight. Those and other energy saving features are expected to reduce utility costs 14 percent lower than if the building had been constructed to code, saving about $234,000 a year at today’s rates, Gardi said.

But LEED certification is about more than saving money; it’s about making the building healthier for the occupants. The ventilation system detects carbon dioxide levels in classrooms and lecture halls and automatically adjusts to bring in outside air. Only adhesives, paint and carpeting containing low volatile organic compounds were used to reduce potentially harmful gases.

“We want our students and staff to be in as healthy a building as possible,” said Elizabeth Lawrence, assistant dean for capital and strategic planning and College of Human Medicine project lead for the Secchia Center.

She noted Grand Rapids often is called the greenest city in the U.S. because it has more buildings per capita with LEED certifications than any other city in the nation.

“We really felt we needed to be part of that landscape,” Lawrence said.
Think of it as three legs of a stool, Jack Lipton, Ph.D. said. According to the renowned Parkinson’s disease researcher, the first leg is education, the second is clinical work with patients, and the third is medical research.

That third leg is getting more emphasis and resources as Michigan State University expands its College of Human Medicine in Grand Rapids. While research has always been an important part of the medical school’s mission, MSU officials are recruiting more top scientists in the search for better treatments and cures for disease.

“We have always had outstanding individuals doing research,” said Jeffrey Dwyer, Ph.D., the medical school’s associate dean for research and community engagement. “Now we’re attracting more of them.”

One of them is Lipton, who joined the College of Human Medicine last year as chair of translational science and molecular medicine. He brought a team of three top researchers, along with a $6.2 million Morris K. Udall Center of Excellence for Parkinson’s disease research grant, funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). With a significant investment by Saint Mary’s Health Care, MSU is adding four more scientists to the team.

None of it would have happened if not for the partnerships MSU formed with Saint Mary’s Health Care, Spectrum Health and the Van Andel Institute. Lipton called his move to Grand Rapids an “opportunity to get in on the ground floor of something that’s very exciting. MSU provided us with a significant amount of resources for the work we want to do.”

That’s also how the Spectrum Health – Michigan State University Alliance and Van Andel Institute lured a $6.8 million center for women’s health and reproduction research headed by leading fertility researcher Asgi T. Fazleabas, Ph.D. He moved the center, funded by an NIH grant, to MSU.

Fazleabas said, “It’s a really great place to work and raise a family.”

For students, too, the opportunity to do research with such respected scientists is a reason they chose the College of Human Medicine, Dwyer said. By the time they graduate, 85-90 percent say they participated in a significant research project, beyond what was required, he said.

Since announcing its expansion in Grand Rapids, the College of Human Medicine and its local partners have attracted leading researchers with a combined portfolio of nearly $25 million in NIH funding.

“We’ve been successful in recruiting some of the best in the world,” Dwyer said. “They come because they’re excited to be part of MSU, but they also come because of the opportunity to work with the Van Andel Institute, Spectrum Health and Saint Mary’s.”

Recruiting researchers becomes easier, once they visit Grand Rapids and see the city’s growing hospitals, the Van Andel Institute and the new Secchia Center.

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Since its founding in 1964, the College of Human Medicine has been highly regarded as a community-based medical school with an emphasis on training primary care physicians.

“What’s being added to Grand Rapids is a strong research component, which is the hallmark of a medical school,” said MSU President Lou Anna K. Simon.

MSU’s partnerships with Spectrum Health and Saint Mary’s Health Care allow the researchers to work closely with physicians, taking new discoveries quickly from the bench to the bedside and giving patients access to the latest treatments.

“It’s the land grant philosophy to move innovation as quickly as possible to benefit people,” said Simon.
She could make a lot of money. Tabitha Oosterhouse would rather make a difference. The third-year medical student already has.

Oosterhouse, 23, founded ECHO (Equipping Clinics and Hospitals Overseas), a branch of Grand Rapids-based Barnabas Charities, to ship new and refurbished medical equipment to underserved areas, such as Ghana.

"Those are our small goals: sending equipment to those hospitals," she said. "Our big goal is to build a hospital."

She and a physician in Ghana hope to buy land and build the hospital soon in an area of the West African nation where typhoid and malaria are endemic. Oosterhouse plans to spend a year in Ghana, beginning this fall between her third and fourth years in the College of Human Medicine. After medical school, she plans to specialize in global health family medicine, then return to Ghana.

Born in England and raised in Michigan, Oosterhouse completed her undergraduate studies at Ferris State University in 2 ½ years, then enrolled in the College of Human Medicine. She began doing mission work at the age of 13 in Ghana, India, Mexico and elsewhere.

"I was basically looking for an interesting, challenging field where I could be of use in an underserved environment," she said. "MSU seemed to have more of an underserved focus than the other schools, which I found attractive."

Alonso Martin del Campo guided a camera through a small incision in a woman’s abdomen so Dr. David Figg could see to remove her gallbladder during laparoscopic surgery at Spectrum Health’s Butterworth Hospital.

"I thought it was an incredible experience," he said.

So have been most of his rotations in the Grand Rapids hospitals and medical clinics, despite the long hours required of a third-year medical student. del Campo, 27, took his first year of medical school in Lansing before transferring to Grand Rapids.

"I felt like it was an up and coming center for medical innovations," he said. "There are a lot of research opportunities here."

A rotation at Clinica Santa Maria, operated by Saint Mary’s Health Care and serving a low-income population, gave him a sense of déjà vu.

"It reminded me of the kind of place I went to as a kid," said del Campo, who grew up in California. It also reminded him of why he wants to go into family practice and maybe volunteer for Doctors Without Borders before opening a practice back in the states.

"I’d like to serve everybody," he said. "But, in particular people who are underserved where primary care is needed."

Jasmina Bajric was a child when the war broke out in her native Bosnia. She saw bombs exploding, heard the gunshots, knew what it was like to lose relatives and live in fear.

When she was 10, she and her 16-year-old brother fled by bus to Czechoslovakia, using fake IDs, and were later reunited with their parents.

"That forever changed me," she said. "I think from an early age, when you see how corrupt the world can be, when you see human suffering, you want to do something about it."

She and her family became residents of Toronto, and, after obtaining her bachelor’s degree at the University of Western Toronto, Bajric enrolled in MSU College of Human Medicine.

In her third year, during a pediatrics rotation, she examined 2-week-old baby Breanna Runnels, while mother Tammy Runnels and Dr. Joanne Peterson, a Grand Rapids-area pediatrician, looked on.

"I feel very confident," Bajric, 27, said afterward. "MSU has taught us great skills we’ll carry all our lives: it’s not just medicine; it’s the human compassion side of medicine."
After finishing his undergraduate degree in chemistry, Christopher Meeusen considered pursuing it as a career. “I decided that was not for me,” he said. “I was not fulfilled spending all my time in lab work. I needed more interpersonal contact.” He’s getting it now. Having just assisted in performing a mastectomy at Saint Mary’s Health Care, Meeusen was studying images on a computer screen of another patient’s breast cancer and discussing how to treat it with Dr. Gilbert Padula.

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Padula knows what it’s like. He earned his MD degree from the College of Human Medicine in 1997 before going on to a residency in radiology. Now he is among more than 1,000 Grand Rapids area physicians who volunteer as clinical associate professors for the College of Human Medicine. They are the key to MSU’s community-based approach to teaching its medical students.

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“It just seems logical to bond the students with this community,” O’Donnell said. “There’s a greater chance they’ll stay and take care of us.”
When Michigan State University decided to build the headquarters for its College of Human Medicine in Grand Rapids, it was counting on a tradition that has helped build much of the city and assure its economic vitality: its unwavering generosity.

The Chronicle of Philanthropy in 2004 recognized the Grand Rapids, Holland and Muskegon area as the second most generous region per capita in the nation, and that charitable nature continues today.

“We’re one of the most generous communities in terms of giving,” said Dick DeVos, a co-founder of Grand Action, the nonprofit organization that spearheaded fundraising for the Secchia Center. “I just see that culture of giving all across West Michigan.”

Even in a tough economy, many of the area’s better-known philanthropists, as well as those not so well known, gave their money for the medical school’s $90 million headquarters, which would be built without a state appropriation. They gave for a variety of reasons: to boost the area’s economy, to improve health care, and to head off a looming doctor shortage. Some gave out of loyalty to their alma mater, some simply because it seemed the right thing to do.

“I don’t think it took a lot of convincing,” said David Frey, a former banker and Grand Action co-founder. “We wanted to send a very strong message that it was important to the region. We’re making a huge bet on the future of health care in West Michigan. We’re investing in this community. It’s a great investment.”

The Frey Foundation was among many local organizations and individuals that donated money to build the Secchia Center.

“What more could you want?”

For many donors, supporting the medical school was a way of giving back to the university that gave them a start on their careers, said Dee Cook, a former MSU Trustee, who, with her husband, Byron, donated money for the medical school’s expansion and urged others to do likewise.

“I met people who share our passion and love of Michigan State,” Dee Cook said. “Michigan State wherever it goes changes people’s lives. Time after time, I’ve had people tell me, ‘Michigan State opened doors for me. Michigan State gave me a chance.’”

While Peter and Joan Secchia have been longtime MSU supporters, the reasons for their large donation went beyond boosting their alma mater. They were among the first to commit their financial support for the school’s expansion, making them the building’s naming donors.

“If you put it out that you’re writing a big check and you believe in the concept, people will follow,” Peter Secchia said.

Joan Secchia called the couple’s support “a no-brainer.”

“It is a good fit all the way around for the community, for the city, as well as the ability to hire researchers and visionary people. It will help the opera. It will help the symphony. It will help the city’s schools.” - Peter Secchia
"I just think what’s happened here is really a medical miracle with the heart center, the cancer center, the children's hospital and now the medical school. I think it’s great."
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"We both believed in our medical field, that we have to keep it in Grand Rapids….One thing I'll be feeling bad about is Bill won't be there. He would have loved it."
- Bea Idema, who with her late husband, Bill, donated money through the Bill and Bea Idema Foundation.

"When you have someone in your family who has some disease, you realize there are all kinds of diseases out there. You pray someone is like this in Grand Rapids. We were struggling as a community. The economy wasn't so hot. This gave us an opportunity to push forward the life sciences."
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to all of the many stakeholders who came together to make the MSU College of Human Medicine possible in our community.

Huntington is proud to support organizations and people doing incredible things that make a difference in the communities we serve.

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Access to the experts and the exceptional teamwork of the entire Spectrum Health system means access to world-class health care. From prevention through diagnosis and treatment, Spectrum Health physicians and hospitals provide outpatient, inpatient, in-home, hospice, physical therapy, and every kind of care in between. That means a total system of care, with you in the center. And that is the best kind of care.
Amway congratulates the Michigan State University College of Human Medicine and proudly welcomes the Secchia Center to the Grand Rapids community.

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network congratulate Michigan State University’s College of Human Medicine on the grand opening of its Secchia Center. This medical education center and the top scientists it will attract are key to creating a healthier future for Michigan.

Welcome, Dr. Sparty, to the place we’ve called home for 55 years.
Welcome to the neighborhood, Michigan State University College of Human Medicine!

Welcome to our community.

A strong community creates a bond between us all. It fosters friendship, kindness, brotherhood, and well-being. And most importantly, we accomplish more together. No one better understands that than we do. That’s why we’re proud to partner with the MSU College of Human Medicine. Like you, we know what it takes to reach your dreams, and we’ll do our best to help you achieve them.

Fifth Third Bank is proud to partner with the MSU College of Human Medicine.
URS welcomes Michigan State University
College of Human Medicine home to
Secchia Center!

It has been our pleasure to work with
the great people of College of Human
Medicine to plan, design, and engineer
your new home in Grand Rapids.

URS is proud to have been a part of
the team that has helped to bring the
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Michigan State College of Human Medicine Secchia Center.

Visit our family of brands at the Footwear Depot or Track ‘n Trail

For over 40 years, Saint Mary’s Health Care and Michigan State University College of Human Medicine have been proud partners in medical education. Now, with the opening of the new Secchia Center, we plan to work even more closely with MSU to grow the medical talents of tomorrow. Saint Mary’s Health Care is a member of Trinity Health, the fourth-largest Catholic health system in the United States.

SMhealthcare.org
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Welcome, Dr. Sparty, to the place we’ve called home for 55 years.
Welcome to our community.

com-mu-ni-ty
noun (pl.-ties)
a feeling of fellowship with others, as a result sharing common attitudes, interests, and goals

A strong community creates a bond between us all. It fosters friendship, kindness, brotherhood, and well-being. And most importantly, we accomplish more together. No one better understands that than we do. That’s why we’re proud to partner with the MSU College of Human Medicine. Like you, we know what it takes to reach your dreams, and we’ll do our best to help you achieve them.

Fifth Third Bank is proud to partner with the MSU College of Human Medicine.

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the Van Andel Institute. The developers – a partnership between The Christman Co. and RDV Corp. – were already planning to construct an office building there as part of a larger complex of four medical buildings and an underlying parking garage, all known as the Michigan Street Development.

URS brought in Ellenzweig Architecture, a Cambridge, Mass. firm specialized in building medical schools, to study whether the site was workable.

“It had to fit that footprint,” Ellenzweig President Michael Lauber said. “Initially we thought that was going to be difficult to do. People were concerned, how would it look sitting atop a five-story parking garage? We made it work.”

The architects developed a plan that called for covering the entire structure, including the parking levels, with cast stone resembling limestone, creating the appearance that it is one building top to bottom. They furthered that illusion by incorporating windows extending from the top floor to the ground.

That solved the exterior problem. Somehow the architects had to fit all the specialized rooms – large lecture halls, small exam rooms and other spaces unique to a medical school – inside the multi-story building.

“The challenge is, how do we organize all those so it is coherent?” Lauber said. “One thing that’s important in a vertical building is to try to maintain a sense of community.”

MSU considered several Grand Rapids sites before settling on Michigan Street near Spectrum Health’s Butterworth Hospital and the Van Andel Institute. The developers – a partnership between The Christman Co. and RDV Corp. – were already planning to construct an office building there as part of a larger complex of four medical buildings and an underlying parking garage, all known as the Michigan Street Development.

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(Continued on Page 4)

A MEDICAL BREAKTHROUGH FOR GRAND RAPIDS

This wasn’t going to be easy.

“We spent months talking about what this building would be,” said Richard Temple, senior project manager for URS, the principal architect for Michigan State University’s new College of Human Medicine headquarters. “If there had to be one story to come out of this it would have to be the story of overcoming all the reasons not to do this.”

The first challenge was, how do you construct a seven-story medical school on top of a five-story parking garage without it looking like, well, a seven-story building on top of a five-story parking garage?

The second was, how do you create a sense of community in a multi-story building, particularly important for a medical school that emphasizes collaboration and the free flow of ideas?

The architects, builders, MSU and other partners overcame those obstacles, as evidenced by the building – called the Secchia Center for MSU Alumni and donors Peter and Joan Secchia – now standing downtown Grand Rapids.

“We had all these challenges that became opportunities,” said Elizabeth Lawrence, assistant dean for capital and strategic planning and College of Human Medicine project lead for the Secchia Center. “It’s functional, and it’s beautiful, and it’s glorious. It’s a real tribute to the expertise of this team.”

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He’s getting it now. Having just assisted in performing a mastectomy at Saint Mary’s Health Care, Meeusen was studying images on a computer screen of another patient’s breast cancer and discussing how to treat it with Dr. Gilbert Padula.

“It has been eye opening,” Meeusen, a fourth-year medical student, said during a rotation in radiation oncology. “It’s completely different than what you do in the first two years. You’re actually treating the patient.”

Padula knows what it’s like. He earned his MD degree from the College of Human Medicine in 1997 before going on to a residency in radiology. Now he is among more than 1,000 Grand Rapids area physicians who volunteer as clinical associate professors for the College of Human Medicine. They are the key to MSU’s community-based approach to teaching its medical students.

Unlike other medical schools, the College of Human Medicine does not operate its own teaching hospital, but relies on doctors and hospital staffs in eight Michigan communities to teach its third- and fourth-year students. Even before expanding its Grand Rapids program to a four-year medical school, for nearly forty years MSU sent many of its third- and fourth-year students to West Michigan to complete their medical education. In addition to Grand Rapids and the MSU campus in East Lansing, the College of Human Medicine has community campuses in Kalamazoo, Flint, Traverse City, Midland, Saginaw and the Upper Peninsula, where third- and fourth-year medical students learn by working with practicing physicians.

“Most doctors like to teach,” Margaret Thompson, MD, associate dean for the Grand Rapids community campus, said. “It keeps them on their toes. I’ve had a lot of physicians out of town who’ve asked me about teaching here.”

“A HEALTHY DOSE OF EDUCATION

The medical school’s expansion in Grand Rapids has made it easier for the city’s hospitals – Spectrum Health and Saint Mary’s Health Care – to recruit physicians who want to teach students, as well as treat patients.

Before venturing into the hospitals, clinics and doctors’ offices, the medical students spend their first year learning the basic science behind medicine, such as anatomy, pharmacology and physiology. In their second year, they begin applying what they’ve learned to hypothetical cases, an approach MSU pioneered called “problem-based learning.” Throughout their second year, small groups of seven or eight students meet with a preceptor, often an active or retired physician, who hands out printed sheets in sequence, each with more information about a hypothetical case. The students research and discuss the case, looking for possible diagnoses and treatments. The preceptors are trained not to give students the answers, but to guide their discussions.

“The idea is if you pursue knowledge, it’s a little harder, but you retain more of it.”
“Your biggest job is to be quiet and let them learn,” said Dr. Denis Alix, a retired surgeon who guides students in the problem-based sessions. “The whole purpose of small-group learning is to have the students direct their own pursuit of knowledge to a certain extent. The idea is if you pursue knowledge, it’s a little harder, but you retain more of it.”

It’s far different from how he was taught 40 years ago.

“In my day, by the second year, you really got tired of going to school,” Alix said. “It was just lecture after lecture. We used to say, ‘We need to relate this more to clinical work.’”

That’s the point of MSU’s problem-based approach: preparing students for the real cases they will see during rotations, or clerkships, as third- and fourth-year students.

In their third year, the students take required rotations, spending two months in each of several areas, such as pediatrics, family practice and general surgery. In their fourth year, they have more freedom to choose their rotations, exposing them to different specialties they might want to pursue as resident physicians after medical school.

MSU has formed partnerships with Grand Valley State University, Ferris State University and Grand Rapids Community College, allowing its medical students to work and study in teams with the nursing, pharmacy, physician assistant and other students from those schools, since that is how they will work in the real world.

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“It has been a really good experience,” the Grand Haven native said. “Not that it’s easy. It has been tough with long hours, but I’ve enjoyed it,” he said.

The community-based approach is mutually beneficial for the students and the physicians who teach them, said John O’Donnell, MD, the medical school’s director of pre-clinical curriculum.

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Congratulations Michigan State University College of Human Medicine Secchia Center

DICK & BETSY DeVOS FAMILY FOUNDATION

Welcome Michigan State University College of Human Medicine Secchia Center

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One single office building can take an enormous toll on the environment. Which is why at PNC we are very mindful of the impact we use. In fact, it is more cost-effective to run LEED-certified buildings than any other financial institution’s. Our natural resources may be finite, but what we can accomplish when we work together is limited.

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Thank you for allowing us to be part of this milestone project!

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